

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----063051 262323Z /62
O 261930Z APR 78 ZFF-4
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5250

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 2462

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EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV MO AG TS
SUBJECT: NORTH AFRICAN POLICY REVIEW

REF STATE 102256

1. WE APPRECIATE CHANCE TO ADDRESS THE CURRENT POLICY REVIEW. WE WILL FOCUS OUR COMMENTS ON THREE AREA:
CONTRADICTIONS IN CURRENT U.S. POLICIES AND ACTIONS, THE POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF AREA DESTABILIZATION FOR THE U.S., AND POSSIBLE U.S. OPTIONS FOR THE NEAR AND LONGER TERM.

2. CONTRADICTIONS IN CURRENT U.S. POLICY. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE THREE STRATEGIES UNDER CONSIDERATION CITED IN REFTEL MAY WELL BE EXPRESSED IN SHORTHAND TERMS, BUT WONDER WHETHER THEY ACCURATELY REFLECT THE REAL ISSUES AT HAND. FOR EXAMPLE, "CONTINUATION OF PRESENT POLICY" SEEMS A MISNOMER, AS IT IS GENERALLY AGREED WE HAVE NO CLEAR, CONSISTENT POLICY. AS A RESULT, WE FACE GROWING MOROCCAN PERPLEXITY OVER CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN OUR WORDS AND DEEDS. OUR HIGH-LEVEL POLICY STATEMENTS HAVE REPEATEDLY LED THE MOROCCANS TO EXPECT POSITIVE U.S. ACTION, BUT OUR ULTIMATE DECISIONS,

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IN MANY CASES, HAVE CAUSED DEEP DISAPPOINTMENT. THE FOLLOWING CASES ARE ILLUSTRATIVE:

A) KING'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON: RECENT MESSAGES FROM WASHINGTON DISCOURAGE MOROCCAN HOPES FOR A VISIT BY KING HASSAN IN THE NEAR FUTURE, DESPITE THE KING'S URGENT REQUEST TO MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH THE PRESIDENT. EARLIER U.S. STATEMENTS, HOWEVER, HAD

UNDOUBTEDLY ENCOURAGED THE MOROCCANS TO EXPECT A FORTHCOMING RESPONSE. IN DECEMBER 3, 1977 MEETING AT THE WHITE HOUSE, FOR EXAMPLE, PRESIDENT ASKED PRIME MINISTER OSMAN TO RELAY HIS DETERMINATION THAT IN THE NEAR FUTURE HE AND KING HASSAN WOULD HAVE A CHANCE TO MEET PERSONALLY AND DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL CONCERN. SUBSEQUENTLY, ENERGY SECRETARY SCHLESINGER, IN JANUARY 10 MEETING WITH THE KING IN MARRAKECH, COMMENTED HOW INDISPENSABLE IT WAS THAT THE KING RESCHEDULE HIS VISIT TO THE U.S. AS SOON AS CONVENIENT TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT. SECRETARY SCHLESINGER ADDED THAT HE FELT IN A FACE-TO-FACE MEETING THE KING COULD FULLY CLARIFY WHAT HE BELIEVED THE ISSUES WERE. SECRETARY SCHLESINGER SAID HE WOULD SPEAK TO THE PRESIDENT ON HIS RETURN. THE KING SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS AND HOPED IT WOULD BE SOON.

B) U.S. SUPPORT FOR MOROCCO. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD MOROCCAN DESIRE FOR MORAL AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT, AND TOWARD MOROCCO'S RECENT REQUEST FOR OV-10S AND COBRAS, CONTAINS SIMILAR DISCREPANCIES. MOROCCO'S ARMS REQUEST WAS UTLIMATELY DEFERRED, ALTHOUGH DEPARTMENT HAD TOLD MOROCCANS IT WISHED TO BE AS HELPFUL AS IT COULD. MEANWHILE, THE DEPARTMENT, IN DEPUTY ASSISTANCE SECRETARY VELIOTES' TESTIMONIES OF OCTOBER 12 AND MARCH 1, TOLD CONGRESS OF OUR DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN MOROCCAN SOVEREIGNTY AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE SAHARA, SECRET

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MUCH TO THE GOM'S DISMAY. AUTHORITATIVE LEAKS TO THE "NEW YORK TIMES" AND "NEWSWEEK" ON OUR INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CONGRESS ON GOM ARMS REQUEST WERE ALSO EXACERBATING. OUR REQUEST THAT MOROCCO WITHDRAW U.S. EQUIPMENT FROM BOTH THE SAHARA AND MAURITANIA, WHERE MOROCCO CONSIDERS IT IS FIGHTING FOR ITS LIFE AS WELL AS IN THE INTEREST OF THE WEST, WAS A MAJOR BLOW. WE HAVE NOW DECIDED TO DELAY DECISION ON TRANSFER OF 81MM HOWITZERS BY SOUTH KOREANS TO MOROCCO (STATE 103776), IN ADDITION TO CONTINUING TO HOLD UP ON APCs. THESE MOVES DO NOT APPEAR TO THE MOROCCANS TO BE COVPATIBLE WITH, FOR EXAMPLE, PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT TO OSMAN ON DECEMBER 3: "I RECOGNIZE THE THREAT THAT COMES FROM THE SOVIET UNION, CUBA AND ALGERIA TO PEACE IN AFRICA." PRESIDENT WENT ON TO SAY, "WE ALSO HAVE DEEP CONCERN OVER ALGERIA'S ATTITUDE WHICH IS AN OBSTACLE TO HARMONY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA. I WANT TO CONTINUE THE CLOSEST CONSULTATIONS WITH KING HASSAN. I WOULD LIKE TO BE KEPT INFORMED OF MOROCCO'S NEEDS." FURTHERMORE, SECRETARY SCHLESINGER ON JANUARY 10 CONVEYED TO THE KING THE PRESIDENT'S GREAT ADMIRATION FOR HASSAN'S ACCOMPLISH-

MENTS AND THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENT TO SECRETARY SCHLESINGER ON JANUARY 6 OF THE PRESIDENT'S CONCERN OVER ALGERIAN "AGGRESSION" AND THE FACT THAT THE KING CAN COUNT ON THE SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES.

C) ZAIRE AND CHAD. WE OF COURSE TOLD THE MOROCCANS IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT USE ANY U.S. EQUIPMENT IN ZAIRE IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR DESPATCH OF A CONTINGENT TO SHABA IN APRIL 1977. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PRESIDENT, IN LONDON INTERVIEW PUBLISHED MAY 3, 1977 IN "LE MONDE," STATED, " WE HONOR, RESPECT AND APPRECIATE MEASURES TAKEN BY FRANCE, MOROCCO AND EGYPT." IN SIMILAR VEIN, PRESIDENT TOLD OSMAN ON DECEMBER 3 THAT MOROCCAN ROLE IN THE SHABA/ZAIRE CONFLICT "WAS AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL." WHILE THE CASE IS NOT STRICTLY PARALLEL WITH
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RESPECT TO CHAD, WHERE THE TRANSFER OF EQUIPMENT RATHER THAN DIRECT MOROCCAN USE WAS THE ISSUE, WE TOLD MOROCCANS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS WE WOULD LOOK WITH SYMPATHY ON THEIR TRANSFER OF LIMITED U.S. EQUIPMENT.

3. REGIONAL DESTABILIZATION AND THE U.S.: THUS FAR, USG FOCUS HAS BEEN PRINCIPALLY ON LEGAL ASPECTS OF SAHARA ISSUE, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF DECEMBER 1975 UNGA RESOLUTION, DISTINCTION BETWEEN MOROCCAN ADMINISTRATION AND SOVEREIGNTY IN THE TERRITORY, AND OUR DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE 1960 MUTUAL DEFENSE AGREEMENT. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM IS MUCH MORE BASIC, IN OUR VIEW, AND PRESENT TRENDS ARE NOT IN THE U.S. INTEREST. THE SAHARA DISPUTE IS IN EFFECT THE CURRENT PHASE OF A LONG-TERM STRUGGLE BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO FOR PREDOMINANT INFLUENCE IN NORTHWEST AFRICA. CONCOMITANTLY, ALGERIA, BACKED BY LIBYA AND OTHER RADICALS, ENJOYS AN UNABATING MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER MOROCCO, ESPECIALLY IN AIRCRAFT AND TANKS, THANKS TO CONTINUING FLOW OF SOPHISTICATED SOVIET WEAPONS. WE ARE THUS FACED WITH PROSPECT OF A RELATIVELY WEAKER MOROCCO AS TIME GOES ON, WITH INCREASED POSSIBILITY OF AN ALGERIAN ESCALATION OR MOROCCAN PREEMPTIVE ACTION, EITHER OF WHICH WOULD RESULT IN DESTABILIZATION IN THE REGION.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5251

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4. THE MAURITANIAN ASPECT. EVEN AS THINGS NOW STAND, MAURITANIA COULD BE THE FIRST TO GO. EXTENSIVE AND INCREASING MOROCCAN ASSISTANCE TO MAURITANIA, INCLUDING PRESENCE OF 10,000 TROOPS, REFLECTS THE RECOGNITION THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL OF OULD DADDAH WOULD BE HIGHLY DISRUPTIVE IN THE REGION. IN THE ABSENCE OF FIRM MOROCCAN COUNTERACTIONS, A SUCCESSOR REGIME WOULD BE UNDER PRESSURE TO REACH ACCOMMODATION WITH ALGERIAN OBJECTIVES, INVOLVING SUCH CONCESSIONS TO POLISARIO AS AN INDEPENDENT SDAR STATE IN THE MAURITANIA OCCUPIED PORTION OF THE SAHARA OR INCORPORATION OF A SDAR ENTITY INTO A RECONSTITUTED MAURITANIA. FURTHER, SENGHOR WOULD PROBABLY FEEL COMPELLED TO REACT, AS INDICATED BY HIS RECENT PROMISE TO CALL IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION FOR MAURITANIAN BLACKS. THE POTENTIAL FOR TERRITORIAL ANARCHY THUS MAKES THE CURRENT WESTERN SAHARA TERRITORIAL DISPUTE PALE IN COMPARISON.

5. THE EFFECTS ON SPAIN SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED. AUTONOMOUS CURRENTS ARE ALREADY BEING EXPLOITED BY ALGERIA IN THE GUISE OF THE MPAIC, AND NEW MAURITANIA OR SDAR REGIME SUPORTIVE OF MPAIC EFFORTS COULD
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SERIOUSLY COMPLICATE SPAIN'S SITUATION IN THE CANARIES. IN ADDITION, ONE SHOULD NOT FORGET THE IMPORTANT ROLE WHICH THE INTEGRITY OF THE MADRID TRIPARTITE ACCORDS CONTINUES TO PLAY. IF THESE ACCORDS WERE DENOUNCED BY MAURITANIA, THE BASIS FOR THE MOROCCAN, SPANISH, AND U.S. POSITIONS COULD COME INTO QUESTION. IN SUM, IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE MOROCCANS ARE PLAYING A STABILIZING ROLE IN MAURITANIA WHICH THE U.S. SHOULD SUPPORT, OR AT A MINIMUM NOT UNDERMINE. WE SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT

THE LONGER THE PROBLEM LASTS, THE STICKIER IT WILL BECOME. THE ARMS RACE WILL CONTINUE, THE AMALGAM OF "SAHARA PEOPLE" AND THEIR DEMANDS WILL BECOME EVEN MORE COMPLEX, AND OUR OWN POSITION WILL CONTINUE TO BE CALLED INTO QUESTION IN THE UN, CONGRESS AND ELSEWHERE.

6. ECONOMIC OUTLOOK. LACK OF A SOLUTION IN THE SAHARA WILL CLEARLY ADD TO THE DIFFICULTIES MOROCCO'S ECONOMY IS LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS. WHILE THE ECONOMY IS NOT ON A WAR FOOTING, AND IS NOT LIKELY TO MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, THE COSTS OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE SAHARA ARE BEING SERIOUSLY FELT. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ISOLATE THE COSTS OF THE CONFLICT, AND EVEN MORE SO TO IDENTIFY THE EFFECTS OF THE CONFLICT ON THE ECONOMY AS A WHOLE. HOWEVER, A SUBSTANTIAL INTERNAL DIVERSION OF GOVERNMENT RESOURCES IS UNDER WAY -- WELL ABOVE THE 20 PERCENT EARMARKED FOR DEFENSE IN THE 1978 BUDGET. ALSO, SIGNIFICANT FUNDS ARE BEING ACQUIRED QUIETLY FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, AND USED, WE THINK, LARGELY FOR OFF-SHORE MILITARY EQUIPMENT PURCHASES. FINALLY, THE SAHARAN CONFLICT IS PROBABLY CONTRIBUTING TO NOTICEABLE DOMESTIC SUPPLY/DEMAND DISTORTION, AS EVIDENCED BY MARKED LIQUIDITY SHORTAGE THROUGHOUT THE ECONOMY AND A GROWING "SLOW SECRET

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PAY" PHENOMENON AFFECTING GOM ACCOUNTS PAYABLE.

7. IF THE CONFLICT PERSISTS, THESE DISTORTIONS WILL CONTINUE AND PROBABLY GROW. MOROCCO, WHICH IS UNABLE TO EARN SUFFICIENT FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO FUND ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (AND THUS RELIES ON SUBSTANTIAL FOREIGN BORROWINGS FOR THIS PURPOSE ALONE), CANNOT INDEFINITELY WITHSTAND A MAJOR UNPRODUCTIVE DRAIN ON ITS AVAILABLE RESOURCES. IN THE ABSENCE OF A SOLUTION, SUBSTANTIAL INTERNAL ECONOMIC DISLOCATIONS COULD BEGIN TO APPEAR BY 1980, AND POSSIBLY EARLIER. THE ONLY EFFECTIVE COUNTER TO SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE THE AVAILABILITY OF CONTINUED AND PROBABLY INCREASING FOREIGN (LARGELY SAUDI ARABIAN) GRANTS AND CONCESSIONAL ASSISTANCE. WHETHER THE SAUDIS ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT PROGRESSIVE INCREASES TO THEIR ALREADY SUBSTANTIAL COMMITMENT REMAINS VERY MUCH A QUESTION MARK. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE GOM MAY TURN TO THE U.S. FOR INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN THE FACE OF UNRESOLVED NEGATIVE TRENDS.

8. U.S. OPTIONS. OUR INTERESTS WOULD APPEAR TO CALL FOR AVOIDANCE OF MOROCCAN AND AREA DESTABILIZATION THROUGH SUPPORTING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AND ASSURING

THAT MOROCCO HAS THE MILITARY WHEREWITHAL TO DETER
POTENTIAL OUTSIDE AGGRESSION. AS FOR POSSIBLE
STRATEGY OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE
A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE SAHARA DISPUTE, OUR
VIEWS ON DIRECT U.S. MEDIATION REMAIN AS OUTLINED IN
RABAT 1940 OF MARCH 31, I.E., WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD
LOOK TO THE AFRICANS AND ARABS FOR POSSIBLE MEDIATION,
AND KEEP THE SUPERPOWERS OUT OF THE PICTURE.

9 CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FRENCH. AS ONE EARLY STEP
IN HELPING TO FORMULATE POLICY ON NORTH AFRICA, WE
SUGGEST DEPARTMENT CONSIDER INITIATING CONSULTATIONS
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WITH THE FRENCH. SUCH CONSULTATIONS COULD DEAL WITH
SOVEREIGNTY/ADMINISTRATION QUESTION IN THE SAHARA,
TACTICS AT THIS FALL'S UNGA AND FUTURE URMS SUPPLIES
FOR MOROCCO. ON THE LAST ISSUE, OUR INABILITY TO MEET
MOROCCAN REQUESTS MIGHT POINT TO THE DESIRABILITY OF
INFORMAL AGREEMENT WITH THE FRENCH ON THEIR ASSUMING
SUPPLY ROLE FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE REGARDING ARMS
FOR USE IN THE SAHARA AND IN MARITANIA.

10. ENCOURAGEMENT OF ALGERIAN MODERATION. DEPARTMENT
WILL PRESUMABLY ALSO EXAMINE WAYS IN WHICH WE MIGHT
ENCOURAGE ALGERIAN (AS WELL AS SOVIET) CAUTION. WHILE
THIS GOES BEYOND OUR RABAT HORIZONS, IT SEEMS TO US THE
USG MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER SPELLING OUT MORE CLEARLY
FOR THE ALGERIANS STEPS WE MIGHT BE FORCED TO TAKE IN
SUPPORT OF MOROCCO SHOULD THE SITUATION DETERIORATE
THROUGH CONTINUED ATTRITION OR GET OUT OF HAND BECAUSE
OF AN ALGERIAN-SPONSORED ESCALATION. WE SHOULD NO
DOUBT BEAR IN MIND THAT OUR RECENT EFFORT TO PRECLUDE
ALGERIAN MISREADING OF OUR DECISION ON THE MOROCCAN
ARMS REQUEST WAS APPARENTLY MISUNDERSTOOD OR
UNPERSUASIVE IN ALGERIA (STATE 72238). WHILE WE
RECALL ONLY ONE PREVIOUS DEMARCHÉ TO THE SOVIETS TO
WHICH THEY APPARENTLY DID NOT RESPOND, AN AGREEMENT
TO CURB SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES WOULD BE A MAJOR CON-
TRIBUTION TO AREA PEACE.

11. CONCLUSIONS: IN SUM, WE BELIEVE THAT, IN OUR
EFFORT TO FORMULATE A COHERENT POLICY FOR NORTH AFRICA,
PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO RESCHEDULING KING HASSAN'S
VISIT TO THE U.S. AND TO CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FRENCH.
THE KING, IN AN EARLY MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, WOULD
BE ABLE TO ADDRESS THE FULL RANGE OF ISSUES OF CONCERN
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TO US. MEANWHILE, FRANK, ACROSS-THE-BOARD DISCUSSION WITH THE FRENCH COULD ALSO HELP CLARIFY OUR THINKING AND POSSIBLY MOBILIZE THE FRENCH TO TAKE UP THE SLACK WHERE WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO ACT DECISIVELY. FINALLY, WE CANNOT OVERSTRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO FOR THE U.S. TO INTRODUCE MORE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN OUR STATEMENTS AND OUR ACTIONS.

12. NEA MAY WISH TO REPEAT THIS MESSAGE TO ALGIERS, TUNIS, AND NOUAKCHOTT. WE NOTE LAST NAMED POST WAS NOT ADDRESSEE OF REFTEL. IN VIEW OF INSEPARABILITY OF MAURITANIA FROM OUR POLICY TOWARD MOROCCO AND ALGERIA, WE ASSUME CURRENT POLICY REVIEW WILL INCLUDE THAT COUNTRY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978RABAT02462
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780179-0322
Format: TEL
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780415/aaaaalvz.tel
Line Count: 350
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5db92fa7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: 78 STATE 102256
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2842365
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORTH AFRICAN POLICY REVIEW
TAGS: PGOV, MO, AG, TS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5db92fa7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014